Amendments to the Specification

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 15, line 7 as follows:

A preferred gp130 activator in accordance with the present invention is IL-6, and more preferred IL6R/IL6 chimera, which is active even in cells that have only gp130 on their surface and lack other receptors of the IL-6 cytokine family. An "IL6R/IL6 chimera" (also called "IL6R/IL6" or "IL-6 chimera"), as used herein, is a chimeric molecule comprising a soluble part of the interleukin-6 receptor fused to all or a biologically active fraction of interleukin-6. The moieties of the chimeric protein can be fused directly, or they can be linked by any suitable linker, such as a disulfide bridge or a polypeptide linker. The linker may be a short linker peptide, which can be as short as 1 to 3 amino acid residues in length or longer, for example, 13 or 18 amino acid residues in length. Said linker may be a tripeptide of the sequence E-F-M (Glu-Phe-Met), for example, or a 13-amino acid linker sequence comprising Glu-Phe-Gly-Ala-Gly-Leu-Val-Leu-Gly-Gly-Gln-Phe-Met (SEQ ID NO:1) introduced between the amino acid sequence of the soluble IL-6 receptor and the IL-6 sequence. Examples of IL6R/IL6 chimeric molecules are known in the art and have been described in detail e.g. in WO 99/02552 or WO 97/32891.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 40, line 5 as follows:

Procedures for RNA extraction and RT-PCR for measuring levels of Sox10, GFAP, MBP and glyceraldehyde 3'-phosphodehydrogenase (G3PDH) gene transcripts were as described in detail previously, including the number of cycles and the primers used [Slutsky et al. 2003]. For the Olig-1 gene (accession NM_016968), the primers were: forward, 5'-TGCGCGCGAGAAGGCCGAAG (SEQ ID NO:2) and reverse, 5'-CCCAGCCAGCCCTCACTTG (SEQ ID NO:3). Conditions for PCR amplification: 94°C, 2 minutes then 30 cycles at 94°C, 30 seconds; 56°C, 30 seconds; 72oC, 1 minute. The PCR buffer [Slutsky et al. 2003] was supplemented with 10% DMSO. After gel electrophoresis, the amplified DNA bands were photographed under UV-light, scanned and their intensity was quantified using the AlphaEase spot density software. Band intensity was verified to be in the linear range by varying the amount of PCR reaction loaded on the gels.